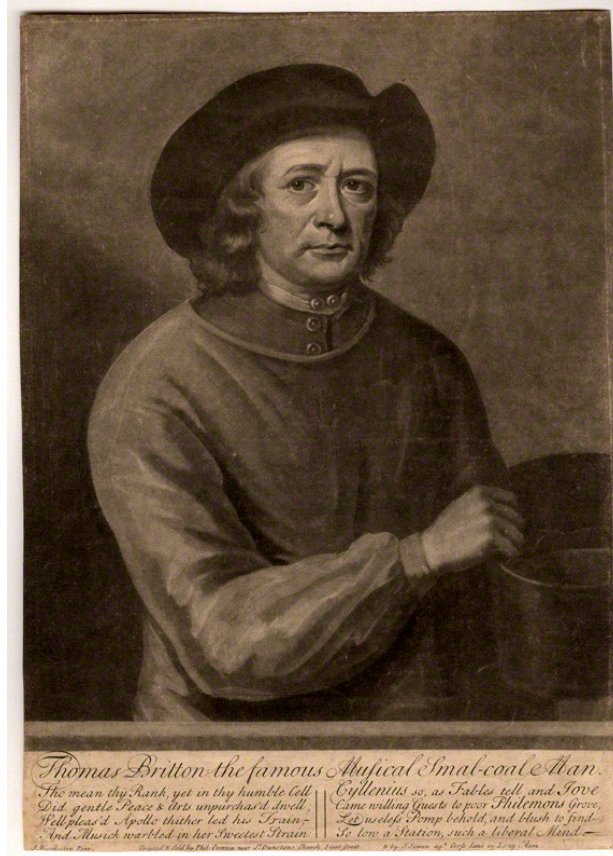


# On Thomas Britton the Famous Musical Small Coal Man - Under His Print

A glee for three voices



Thomas Britton by John Simon after John Wollaston  
Mezzotint, National Portrait Gallery, London, (ref: NPG D817)  
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**Music by Benjamin Cooke**

**Words by John Hughes**

**Edited by Andrew Pink**

The London-born composer **Benjamin Cooke** (1734–93) was named after his father, a music publisher of New Street in Covent Garden. He was taught music by J. C. Pepusch (1667–1752) as a pupil of the Academy of Ancient Music, which Pepusch had founded in 1710. At the age of twelve Benjamin Cooke became assistant organist at Westminster Abbey. At the age of eighteen he took over the direction of the Academy of Ancient Music when Pepusch died. Shortly afterwards he also became Organist and Master of the Boys at Westminster Abbey, and at the end of his life was jointly organist of both the Abbey, and St Martin's-in-the-Fields.

This three-part glee of 1773 is typical of the recreational music that Benjamin Cooke wrote for meetings of the musical clubs and societies that flourished in and around the City of London during the eighteenth-century. Cooke himself belonged to the Academy of Ancient Music, the Noble and Gentlemen's Catch Club, the Glee Club, the Madrigal Society, and the Anacreontic Society.

**Thomas Britton** (1644–1714) is a significant figure in the history of public concerts in London. A coal merchant by trade, he was a passionate *amateur* of music and from 1678 until his death held regular concerts at his premises in Clerkenwell (located on the present-day corner of Jerusalem Passage and Aylesbury Street). This represented the first sustained effort at promoting public concerts in England. The concerts were much frequented by the great and good of the day – not only leading musicians such as Handel and Pepusch but also painters, poets, politicians and members of the nobility. Thomas Britton is buried in the churchyard of St. James's Church, Clerkenwell.

The text set here was adapted from the verses of **John Hughes** (1677–1720) – a violinist at Britton's concerts – to be found under the 1703 mezzotint engraving of Thomas Britton by John Simon (d.1751) reproduced on the cover of this edition. This engraving was based on the portrait of Britton painted by John Wollaston (c.1672–1749).

### References:

- ELKIN Robert (1955) *The Old Concert Rooms of London*.  
Edward Arnold, London.
- PINK Andrew (2000) *Benjamin Cooke* MA thesis (in 2 vols)  
APU. Cambridge.
- SADIE Stanley (Ed) (1981) 'London' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.  
Macmillan. London.

### Sources:

This edition was made using the two autograph copies of the work that are to be found in the collection of The Royal College of Music, London; GBLcm 814.46 & GBLcm 817.11.

### Editorial note:

Slurs have been added to indicate the placing of words.

Hyphens within words are editorial; other spelling and punctuation is that of m.s. 814.46, which has the most complete underlay of text.

- bb 29 & 31: E-natural added

- b 31: cautionary E-flat added.

- the lengthy title of this edition is found only in GBLcm 814.46.

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## On Thomas Britton the Musical Small Coal Man - Under His Print

*October 21st 1773, Dorset Court (Westminster)*

[Tenor] *tr*  
 Tho' mean thy Birth yet in thy hum - ble Cell did gen - tle peace and Arts un - pur - chas'd dwell well

[Tenor]  
 Tho' mean thy Birth yet in - thy hum - ble Cell did gen - tle peace and Arts un - pur - chas'd dwell well

[Bass]  
 Tho mean thy Birth yet in thy hum - ble Cell did gen - tle peace and rts un - pur - chas'd dwell well

7  
 T. pleas'd A - poll - o thi - ther led his train and Mu - sick war -

T. pleas'd A - poll - o thi - ther led his train and Mu - sick war -

B. pleas'd A - poll - o thi - ther led his train and Mus - ick war - bled war -

13  
 T. bled in her sweet - est strain. *tr* Sy - lle - nius so as fa - bles tell and Jove came will - ing guests to poor -

T. bled - in her sweet - est strain. Sy - lle - nius so as fa - bles tell and Jove came will - ing

B. - bled in her sweet - est strain. Sy - lle - nius so as fa - bles tell and Jove came will - ing guests will - ing

4 18

T. Phi - le - mon's grove. Let use - less pomp be - hold be - hold and blush be - hold and blush and blush - to -

T. guests to poor Phi - le - mon's grove. Let use - less pomp be hold and blush be - hold and blush and blush - to -

B. guests to poor Phi - le - mon's grove. Let use - less pomp be - hold and blush be - hold and blush be - hold and blush to

24

T. find so low a sta - tion such a lib - ral mind be hold and blush to find so low a

T. find so low a sta - tion so low a sta - tion such a lib - ral mind such a lib - ral mind so

B. find so low a sta - - - - - tion such a lib - ral mind be - hold and blu -

29

T. sta - - - - - tion such a lib - ral mind.

T. low a - sta - - - - - tion such a lib - ral mind.

B. - sh to find so low a sta - - - - - tion such a lib - ral mind.